

## U.S. Department of Commerce Aerospace Roundtable (9/4/2003)

The Department of Commerce hosted a roundtable of aerospace trade associations to discuss standards issues related to the aerospace industry. Assistant Secretary for Trade Development Linda Conlin and Deputy Under Secretary for Technology Benjamin Wu hosted the meeting. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation and Machinery Joseph Bogosian moderated the session.

Four industry associations gave presentations at the roundtable:

- Aerospace Industries Association (AIA)
- General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA)
- Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE)
- American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)

Representatives from other federal agencies, standards development organizations and private companies also participated.

DAS Bogosian welcomed participants to the roundtable and provided an overview of the standards initiative. He described the Department's Eight-Point Standards Initiative in March to help the USG take a more coordinated approach to addressing standards and technical regulations, as requested by industry.

Deputy Under Secretary for Technology Administration (TA) Ben Wu described TA's role in the initiative and explained how NIST and ITA are coordinating efforts.

Assistant Secretary for Trade Development (TD) Linda Conlin described TD's role in the initiative, including a brief description of the multiple industry roundtables to gather information on priority standards issues and efforts to address standards and regulatory problems bilaterally as well as multilaterally.

TD Executive Director Jon Menes noted that the standards effort is complicated due to differences between the United States and other countries. He also noted that the new ITA Standards Liaison will begin work the following week to coordinate contacts with industry.

David Johnson, Asst. VP Technical Operations Council of the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) described AIA's role in international organizations to develop standards, and noted that management standards and environmental standards related to production processes are high priority issues for the U.S. aerospace industry. Most problems result from standards that cover all industries but may be inappropriate for the aerospace industry, for example due to special safety or performance requirements. AIA requested that USDOC expand its monitoring of standards issues and to use ANSI as the forum for aerospace standards.

Barry Valentine, VP, International Affairs of the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) explained that the lack of global standardization and unilateral standards development, especially in Europe, are the highest priority issues for GAMA. The biggest problem is varied interpretation of how to meet standards, especially critical for this highly regulated industry. The

U.S. aerospace industry has been an active participant in international standards development, especially trying to harmonize global standards through the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The U.S. Government has worked well in the past to address specific standards problems. Regular and timely briefings by the USG in Washington and overseas of standards or regulatory issues are critical to addressing trade barriers successfully.

Scott Klavon, Manager, Aerospace Products & Services at the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) described how SAE is very active in developing aerospace-related standards in the U.S. and internationally. Unique manufacturing and operational requirements and quality management issues are the highest priority for the aerospace industry. Robust national and international systems of industry standards are necessary to support the industry's extensive technical data and trade needs. U.S. industry is very active in developing standards so problems resulting from divergent standards are limited. Because aerospace is a global industry, regulations need to appropriately implement global standards. SAE's primary message was to highlight the fact that global standards are developed in organizations beyond the ISO, and urged the Commerce Department to ensure that USG trade policies do not exclude the development of standards in organizations such as SAE. Continued government-industry partnerships to develop and monitor standards are critical.

Craig Day, Standards Program Manager at the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) stated that AIAA works mostly on space standards issues. Different approaches by the U.S. and other countries towards addressing standards issues are a growing problem. Governments in a few countries historically have driven space-related standards, but as markets and technology evolve international standards will gain greater prominence and importance. USG should push for U.S. standards to be adopted internationally. Centralized management system standards in some countries (Europe) could become a problem for U.S. industry in the future. Government-industry partnerships to increase awareness of standards issues are required.

#### Q&As

Menes/TD commented that there appear to be fewer standards problems facing the aerospace industry than other industries. Panelists opined that this stems from the highly concentrated nature of the industry (few countries and companies dominate the market and set de facto standards), the international regulation of the industry via ICAO and the active role U.S. companies play in international standards development activities.

Industry attendees to the round table noted that the biggest problems arise from ensuring that aerospace-specific needs are not compromised by general material and process standards and regulations. For example, no known replacement exists for the halon gas used for fire suppression on aircraft, but use of halon is generally prohibited across all industries. The industry requires special standards and regulations to meet unique industry requirements.

The panelists reinforced the need for U.S. embassy staff to be educated about standards and about aerospace-specific issues to serve as a good resource for information and awareness of potential problems. The associations offered to assist with educating USG staff on relevant issues. The panelists also urged the results of the standards assessment be made widely available.

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